



DELTA STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

A California State Agency

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Date: February 15, 2011
To: Delta Stewardship Council Members
From: Joe Grindstaff, Executive Officer
Subject: Meeting, February 24-25, 2011

The agenda for our twelfth meeting, and supporting material, is attached. Some additional handouts may be provided at the meeting. I offer some brief comments on the agenda and materials here for your perusal.

The key part of Thursday's agenda, and overlapping into Friday, will be an in-depth discussion on the development of the Delta Plan. The first draft of the Plan was made public on February 14, and comments are starting to come in. We'll go over findings and the list of policies and recommendations in detail. Another item is a presentation by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which is seeking public comment as it considers actions to address water quality conditions affecting aquatic resources in the Delta.

Significant parts of Friday's agenda include the Lead Scientist's Report and the Delta Independent Science Board's (ISB) Report. Lead scientist, Dr. Cliff Dahm, will discuss thirteen recommended research projects designed to advance understanding of the Delta. Then, Dr. Richard Norgaard, Chair of the Delta ISB, will discuss how the Delta ISB will approach its review of the first publicly released draft of the Delta Plan.

U.S. EPA Presentation (Agenda Item 6)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is publishing an advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPR) to seek comments from interested parties on possible EPA actions to address water quality conditions affecting aquatic resources in the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary (Bay Delta Estuary). EPA is asking the public to consider broadly whether EPA should be taking new or different actions under its programs to address recent significant declines in multiple aquatic species in the Bay Delta Estuary. There may be a range of changes in EPA's activities in the Bay Delta Estuary that would be constructive, including enforcement, research, revisions to water quality standards, etc. EPA will consider all comments before deciding what changes, if any, should be pursued.

"Coequal goals" means the two goals of providing a more reliable water supply for California and protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem. The coequal goals shall be achieved in a manner that protects and enhances the unique cultural, recreational, natural resource, and agricultural values of the Delta as an evolving place."

– CA Water Code §85054

Delta Plan Development (Agenda Items 7 and 13)

The first preliminary staff draft of the Delta Plan was posted on the DSC website on Monday, February 14. This first preliminary draft is designed to put the key findings and conceptual strategies on the table for the Council to discuss and receive input from stakeholders and the public. This is just the beginning of the process and it is expected the final Delta Plan will evolve considerably before we're finished. Following the Council meetings, revisions will be made. Three subsequent preliminary staff drafts of the Delta Plan will be released in March, April and May. An official, public review draft Delta Plan and programmatic Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be released in June as part of the formal review process (release of the draft EIR for public comment). It is anticipated that several subsequent drafts of the Plan may be necessary to respond to public comments, leading up to adoption of the final EIR and Delta Plan at the November meeting (in time to meet subsequent state regulatory requirements, and ultimately the January 1, 2012, statutory mandate). The Attorney General's Office will give a short presentation about the EIR process and compressed timeline for adoption of the Plan.

Lead Scientist Report (Agenda Item 11)

This report provides an update on the Delta Science Program's process for developing research grant funding recommendations to the Council for the 2010 Proposal Solicitation Package (PSP). The goal of the PSP is to invest in new scientific knowledge that will fundamentally advance the understanding of the complex environments/systems within the Council's jurisdiction to aid policy-makers and managers. About \$8 million from Prop 84 will be used to fund research in four focused topic areas: Native Fish Biology and Ecology; Food Webs of Key Delta Species and their Relationship to Water Quality and Other Drivers; Coupled Hydrologic and Ecosystem Models; and Water and Ecosystem Management Decision Support System Development. A total of 49 proposals were received. Each has undergone several levels of review, an administrative review, a minimum of two independent external scientific reviews, and multiple reviews by the Final Review Panel (FRP) consisting of thirteen independent scientific experts from across the country. The initial recommendation is for funding 13 proposals that span all four of the focused topic areas and total \$7,095,185. This will come back to the Council for final approval in March.

Delta Independent Science Board Report (Agenda Item 12)

Dr. Richard Norgaard, Chair of the Delta Independent Science Board (ISB), will report on the outcomes of the February 18 Delta ISB's teleconference held in Sacramento. Chair Norgaard will brief the Council on how the Delta ISB will approach its review of the first publicly released draft of the Delta Plan. Dr. Norgaard will also discuss the Delta ISB's proposed schedule for reviewing and submitting comments.

Our February meeting is once again being held within the legal boundaries of the Delta. It will be in the first floor Galleria of the West Sacramento City Hall. The address is 1110 West Capitol Avenue, West Sacramento. If I can answer any questions or provide any information, please contact me at (916) 445-4500 or jgrindstaff@deltacouncil.ca.gov